MEMO

TO: Energy & Environment Committee

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DATE: February 5, 2004

SUBJECT: SCAG's Environmental Justice Program

SUMMARY:

SCAG has developed a leading environmental justice program among the nation's metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). This is attributable to public expectations and the locally high profile of environmental justice issues, as well as to federal planning regulations that require MPOs to analyze the benefits and burdens of their plans, programs and policies on minority and low-income populations. The Committee will receive a presentation on SCAG's environmental justice program.

BACKGROUND:

Federal environmental justice regulations stem from Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin by recipients of federal funds. President Clinton's Executive Order 12898 (1994) directs all federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their mission, and both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration adopted environmental justice orders in the late 1990s.

During the development of the 1998 Regional Transportation Plan for the SCAG region, environmental justice issues in transportation were prominent, particularly as related to the equity of transportation service and investments in the SCAG region. Aviation planning was a key environmental justice issue in development of the 2001 RTP, and in the current RTP, the impact of goods movement on traffic, air quality, and safety in the region are of concern to environmental justice groups.

Before adoption of the 2001 RTP, SCAG developed a Compliance Procedure for Environmental Justice in the Transportation Planning Process (approved by the Transportaion & Communications Committee in September 2000). An extensive environmental justice analysis was conducted for the 1998 RTP, expanded for the 2001 RTP, and has continued during development of the 2004 RTP. The analysis considers several performance measures for environmental justice and takes into account the burden of taxes that pay for the region's transportation system. In addition, SCAG has conducted targeted outreach to environmental justice leadership and community groups to communicate the impacts of the RTP and gather feedback.